



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence
against people and animals



ANIMAL CRUELTY AS AN INDICATOR AND PREDICTOR CRIME

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“The topic of animal cruelty may seem unimportant in the face of events like the Boston bombing, school shootings, and other recent tragedies, but we know there’s a history of animal cruelty in the backgrounds of many perpetrators of violent acts.

“Understanding this link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence is critical to the Department.”

-- Mary Leary, Acting Assistant Attorney General,
U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs
in establishing the US DOJ Working Group on Animal Cruelty, Apr. 30, 2013

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Adding a question about whether the batterer threatened or hurt pets to the Nashville, Tenn. Domestic violence crisis line helped decrease domestic violence homicides by 80%.

(National Link Coalition, 2014)

71% of women in domestic violence shelters reported their batterer abused or killed their animals.

(Ascione, F.R. (1998). Battered women's reports of their partners' and their children's cruelty to animals. *Journal of Emotional Abuse, 1*, 119-133.)

A history of animal abuse is one of the four most significant risk factors of who is most likely to become a domestic violence batterer.

(Walton-Moss, Manganello, Frye & Campbell (2005): Risk factors for IPV and associated injury among urban women. *Journal of Community Health, 30*(5), 377-389.)

Batterers who also abuse pets use more controlling and violent behaviors and are more dangerous than batterers who do not also attack animals.

(Simmons, C.A. & Lehman, P. (2007). Exploring the link between pet abuse and controlling behaviors in violent relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence 22*(9), 1211-1222.)

40 states allow courts to specifically include pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders.

(National Link Coalition, 2024)

Acts of animal cruelty committed with the intention of intimidating, controlling or coercing a spouse or partner are defined as domestic violence, stalking or dating violence in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

(National Link Coalition, 2024)

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... YOUTH CRIME

Between 10% and 43% of school shooters have histories of animal cruelty, a warning sign for a small but deadly minority of mostly youthful offenders.

(Arluke, A., & Madfis, E. (2013). Animal abuse as a warning sign of school massacres: A critique and refinement. *Homicide Studies*, 20(10), 1-16; Verlinden, S., Herson, M., & Thomas, J. (2000). Risk factors in school shootings. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 20(1), 3-56; Arluke, A., Lankford, A., & Madfis, E. (2018, October). Harming animals and massacring humans: Characteristics of public mass and active shooters who abused animals. *Behavioral Sciences & The Law*. DOI: 10.1002/bsl.2385.)

As many as 31% of youths in Chicago have attended a dog fight.

(Cleveland, S. (2006). *Dog fighting and youth: Effects, consequences, and tools for intervention*. Presentation at 2006 American Humane Annual Conference, Schaumburg, Ill., Sept. 18-20.)

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD ABUSE

Animal abuse was found in 88% of homes under investigation for physical child abuse.

(DeViney, E. Dickert, J., & Lockwood, R. (1983). The care of pets within child abusing families. *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems*, 4, 321-329.)

The first known cases of perpetrators prosecuted simultaneously for animal cruelty and assault on a child occurred in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1649.

(National Link Coalition, 2014)

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... OTHER CRIMES

Animal cruelty, particularly when premeditated, was called a novel aggression warning behavior; reporting, investigating, and prosecuting animal cruelty may help minimize violent acts toward humans, including terrorism, and manage threats of planned violence.

(Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (2018, July 18). *Animal cruelty: A possible warning behavior for terrorism and other premeditated violence against humans which needs reporting and further vetting*. Washington, DC: JCAT)

70% of Massachusetts animal abusers were found to have histories of other crimes.

(Arluke, A. & Luke, C. (1997). Physical cruelty toward animals in Massachusetts, 1975-1996. *Society & Animals*, 5(3), 195-204.)

21.6% of human fatalities from dog bites between 2000-2009 involved dogs that had been abused.

(Patronek, G.J., Sacks, J.J., Delise, K.M., Cleary, D.V., & Marder, A.R. (2013). Co-occurrence of potentially preventable factors in 256 dog bite-related fatalities in the United States (2000-2009). *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 243(12), 1726-1736.)

At least one form of animal cruelty is now a felony crime in all 50 states.

(National Link Coalition, 2014)

Participating in, attending, or hosting a dog fight became a federal felony in 2014.

(National Link Coalition, 2014)

Trained veterinary forensics experts are now widely available to assist law enforcement officers and prosecutors investigating animal cruelty cases.

(National Link Coalition, 2014)

More than 60% of animal cruelty offenders in Chicago also had arrests on felony charges, multiple prior arrests, narcotics charges, battery-related and violent offense charges, and alleged gang connections.

(Chicago Police Dept., 2008. Statistical Summary of Offenders Charged with Crimes Against Companion Animals.)

Animal cruelty is defined under racketeering and criminal enterprise laws in Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Virginia.

(National Link Coalition, 2024)

35% of search warrants executed in Chicago for animal abuse or dog fighting investigations resulted in seizures of illegal drugs and/or weapons.

(Chicago Crime Commission (2004). RAV2: Reduce animal violence, reduce all violence: A program to amplify human and animal violence prevention and reduction by targeting dog fighting and animal cruelty. *Action Alert* (August), 1-5)

A history of animal abuse was a better predictor of sexual assault than were prior convictions for homicide, arson or firearms offenses. 99% of animal cruelty offenders had committed other crimes, averaging 4 different offenses.

- **Offender profiling for homicide, sexual assault, arson, stalking, and child abuse cases would benefit from law enforcement having knowledge of animal cruelty cases.**

(Clarke, J. P.(2002). *New South Wales police animal cruelty research project*. Sydney, Australia: New South Wales Police Service.)

Responding to the increase in animal cruelty cases and the public's demand for more effective action, enforcement and prosecutors in numerous jurisdictions have established specialized animal crime units. These have included:

- Los Angeles County, CA
- San Bernardino County, CA
- Cobb County, GA
- Chicago, IL
- Baltimore, MD
- Saint Louis, MO
- Nassau County, NY
- Syracuse, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- Harris County TX

“Over the last decade, social scientists and law enforcement agencies have begun to examine cruelty to animals as a serious *human* problem closely linked to domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and other violent crimes.”

“[These efforts] cannot undo generations of abuse, but they can be an effective means of breaking the cycle of family violence from one generation to the next.”

-- *International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2000*